



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Public Affairs Office
2400 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704

Contact: Lt. Col. Tim Donovan
608-242-3050
Cell: 608-516-1777

August 11, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Huge send-off planned for 450 Wisconsin National Guard artillery troops Saturday

Soldiers and families to gather at Volk Field Saturday

State, local and military officials are planning a huge send-off ceremony and six hometown send-offs for about 450 Wisconsin Army National Guard soldiers who were mobilized this week.

The soldiers are members of 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids, with units in Mosinee, Marshfield, Clintonville and Stevens Point. In addition, the battalion is being augmented by 123 soldiers from the Kenosha-based 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery, and another 12 from the Portage-based 132nd Support Battalion who will be folded into the unit to form the battalion's Company C. The battalion will leave Wisconsin Saturday, Aug. 13, for mobilization processing and several months of additional training at Camp Shelby, Miss., before deploying overseas for one full year.

The entire battalion will gather with their families for a send-off on Saturday, Aug. 13, at Volk Field Air National Guard Base near Camp Douglas, Wis. Following a noon ceremony outside a large aircraft hangar, soldiers will have a few final hours with their families until boarding one of several chartered airliners that will fly them to Mississippi.

The Volk Field send-off ceremony will be led by Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening and Brig. Gen. Kerry Denson. Other senior military officials will also be on hand, along with elected public officials and soldiers' families.

Music for the ceremony will be provided by the Guard's 132nd Army Band of Madison, which has played for similar send-off and welcome home events for Guard units from around the state.

Local send-offs were scheduled in several of the battalion's hometown communities this week.

— more —

Artillery battalion send-off

Page 2

Mobilization of 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery brings the total number of Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard members on active duty to about 2,440. Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 6,650 soldiers and airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard — nearly 70 percent of the Guard's 9,400 member force — have served on active duty. Another battalion of the 32nd Infantry Brigade — 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry — will begin active duty with about 570 soldiers on Aug. 17.

About 1,180 soldiers and airmen of the Wisconsin National Guard are currently serving overseas and 620 others from 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, are ready to depart for Southwest Asia now that their two months of predeployment training at Camp Shelby, Miss., is complete.

#

Note to Editors and News Directors: News media are welcome to cover the send-off of 450 soldiers of 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery at Volk Field Saturday, Aug. 13.

News media access to the base will be available after 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning. The official send-off ceremony will begin at 12:00 p.m. and last approximately 30 minutes. Soldiers will depart Volk Field aboard several chartered civilian airliners during the afternoon. From the end of the ceremony until they are called to board a flight, soldiers and their families will have time together at the airfield. News media may conduct interviews with consenting soldiers and family members. Senior military officials and public affairs officers will also be available for questions.

News media organizations wishing to cover the Volk Field send-off event must call Tim Donovan (608-242-3050 or Cell 608-516-1777) so arrangements can be made for access to the military installation. Volk Field is located at Exit 55 off Interstate 90-94 in Juneau County.

Current National Guard News Releases available at: <http://dma.wi.gov/news.asp>